

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, and 4-7 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 2, and 5 have been amended. Claims 3 and 8 have been canceled. Favorable reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

I. OBJECTIONS TO THE ABSTRACT

The abstract stands objected to because of informalities. Applicant has amended the abstract in order to address the Examiner's concerns. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

II. OBJECTIONS TO THE DISCLOSURE

The disclosure stands objected to because of informalities. Paragraphs in the summary of the invention portion of the specification have been amended to avoid legal phraseology. Thus, withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

Regarding the last paragraph of page 8, the Examiner pointed out that the coupling parts 3d are not in an "arc" shape. The paragraph has been amended to remove the language, "an arc shape," to address the Examiner's concerns. Thus, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

III. OBJECTIONS TO THE CLAIMS

The claims stand objected to because of informalities. Specifically, claims 1, 2, and 5 have been amended in order to improve readability, and avoid unclear phraseology pointed out by the Examiner. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

IV. REJECTIONS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 3 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Claims 3 and 8 have been canceled. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

V. REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 1-8 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 AND 103

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication 11-53084 ("Toshio"). Claims 1, 2, and 4-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's acknowledged prior art ("AAPA") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,046,975 ("Seeger"). All pending claims are believed to be allowable for at least the following reasons. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to further clarify pertinent features of the invention. Specifically, the invention defined in independent claim 1 now requires “the peel sheet and the spacer sheet are provided with penetration holes through which the contact plates can penetrate, and coupling grooves by which the adjacent penetration holes are coupled in a direction crossing a feed direction of the peel sheet,” and “the coupling grooves are shifted at one side in the widthwise direction thereof to rear ends in the feed direction of inner circumferences of the adjacent penetration holes so that there are no protrusions protruding in the feed direction from the rear ends of the inner circumferences of the adjacent penetration holes.” Claims 2 and 5 have been amended primarily to improve readability. Support for these amendments is found at, for example, page 9, line 23 - page 10, line 27 (in particular, page 10, lines 20-24) referring to Fig. 2 (claim 1); page 6, line 26 - page 7, line 6 referring to Fig. 2 (claim 2); and page 11, lines 12-24 referring to Fig. 3 (claim 5) of the present specification. Thus, no new matter has been introduced by the amendments.

According to embodiments of the present invention, a peel sheet is peeled when being fed for use. Coupling grooves are shifted at one side in the widthwise direction thereof to rear ends of inner circumferences of the adjacent penetration holes in the feed direction of the peel sheet so that there are no protrusions from the rear ends of the penetration holes. Thus, embodiments of the invention have advantages in that the peel sheet can be smoothly peeled because there are no peel remains due to protrusions in the feed direction capable of the peel sheet. See, for example, page 9, line 23 - page 10, line 27 referring to Fig. 2 of the specification.

The Toshio reference does not show a feed direction of a film separator 12. Supposing that the film separator 12 is fed and peeled in the longitudinal direction of the separator, protrusions protruding in the feed direction of the processing tape 14 exist at least in T-shaped coupling grooves, and therefore, peel remains are generated by the protrusions. This is true as long as the film separator 12 is peeled off along the longitudinal direction of the separator 12.

In fact, nothing in Toshio teaches or suggests a sheet in which there are no protrusions in the feed direction from the rear ends of the inner circumferences of the adjacent penetration holes as claimed. Accordingly, Toshio cannot be said to anticipate the invention defined in independent claim 1.

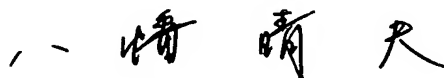
The Seeger patent was cited as describing the claimed grooves. However, it is respectfully submitted that Seeger does not show that a peel sheet is peeled off while being fed, much less the specific relationship between the feeding direction and the coupling grooves as recited in independent claim 1. Therefore, the Seeger patent does not make up the deficiencies of AAPA. Accordingly, the invention defined in independent claim 1 is believed to be patentable over the combination of AAPA and the Seeger patent.

For at least the reasons set forth above, the invention defined in independent claim 1 and their dependent claims is believed to be patentable over the cited art. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

VI. CONCLUSION

Applicant believes that all pending claims are in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance at an early date. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 510-843-6200.

Respectfully submitted,
BEYER WEAVER & THOMAS, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Haruo Yawata' in a stylized cursive script.

Haruo Yawata
Limited Recognition under 37 CFR § 10.9(b)

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